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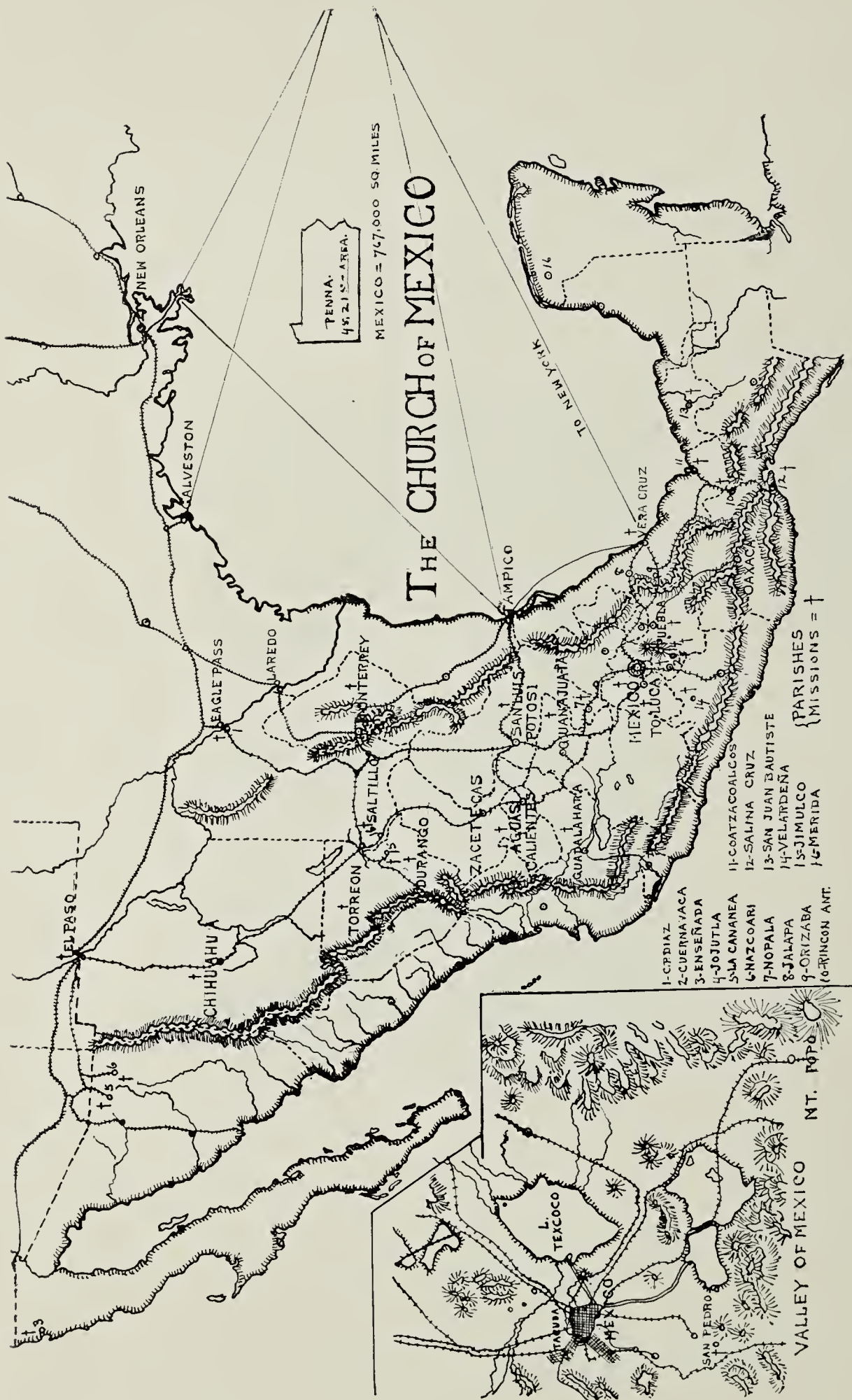
MEXICO:

THE LAND, THE PEOPLE, AND THE CHURCH



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Bishop of Mexico

THE BOARD OF MISSIONS
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MEXICO : THE LAND, THE PEOPLE, AND THE CHURCH



Photo by Waite

ONE OF MEXICO'S SNOW-CLAD PEAKS

Popocatepetl from the village of Amecameca

THE ANCIENT AZTEC LAND—RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTIES AND REFORMS—THE PEON, HIS ORIGIN AND POVERTY—HIS HOME AND CHILDREN'S NEED FOR SCHOOLS—THE HOOKER SCHOOL—WORK AT HUMINI—ST. ANDREW'S SEMINARY

The Aztec Land

MEXICO, the land of the Aztecs, is a country of no mean dimensions. Its area is 767,005 square miles, which is equal to that of all the United States east of the Mississippi River, with the exception of Wisconsin. It is equal to the combined territory of Great Britain, France, Spain, Germany, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. When Bishop Aves wishes to travel between the two missions of Enseñada and Salina Cruz, he must cover a distance as great as that from Boston to Salt Lake City; and then he is a thousand miles short of Mexico's most easterly shore. And when it is taken into consideration that this vast country is no wilderness, but is inhabited by some 14,000,000 people, and that many points

can be reached only by horseback or stage, it is apparent what an overwhelming charge it is for a single bishop.

But Mexico is notable not only for its horizontal extent, but likewise for its altitude. From both its eastern and western shores, the land rises abruptly to a great central plateau, which comprises the greater portion of the country. This mighty table-land ranges in elevation from 4,000 to 9,000 feet, with snow-clad peaks almost 18,000 feet above the sea. The City of Mexico has an elevation of 7,350 feet. As a result, Mexico has every variety of climate, from that of the tropics at Vera Cruz, to that of the cold temperate zone. It is possible in a single day's horseback ride to pass from orange and banana plantations to the regions of wheat, corn and frost. By rail, it can be done within an hour.

The People and Their History

The people of Mexico are for the most part descended from the ancient Aztecs and other aboriginal races. Almost two-fifths of them are pure-blooded, and a somewhat larger number have an admixture of Spanish. The balance are foreigners—Americans, English, Spanish, French, German. President Benito Juárez, the greatest ruler Mexico has ever had, was a full-blooded Indian, a descendant of the original possessors of the land. Even those who are partly Spanish take chief pride in their Indian ancestry. As one of our native priests once remarked, "If it were possible, I would take every drop of Spanish blood from my veins." The term "Mexicans" is applied officially to all the citizens of Mexico, whether of pure or mixed blood. But the Mexicans of pure Indian descent, especially those who still speak the old dialects and retain the primitive costume, are commonly distinguished from the others as "Indians." But of course the significance of the term "Indian" in Mexico is very different from what it is in the United States. Spanish is the common language of the country, but Aztec and other aboriginal dialects are still spoken extensively.

Mexico is full of ancient ruins—pyramids, temples and palaces—all that is left of the prehistoric civilization of which the Aztecs were the last representatives. The latter founded Tenochtitlan (Tenoshtitlán), or the City of Mexico, in 1325; and from it as a centre extended their empire over all the surrounding country. In 1521 Hernando Cortéz overthrew the Aztec civilization, and planted a new empire upon its ruins. Then followed 300 years of Spanish domination, three long centuries of misrule and oppression. At the end of this period the people rose in their might, and, led by the patriot priest, Hidalgo, drove out the Spanish power. But it has taken the Mexican people many years to learn the art of self-government; the beginning was made with the rise of Benito Juárez in 1867. Under his wise admin-

istration, and that of his successor, Porfirio Díaz, Mexico has taken rank among the republics of the world.

The Religion of Mexico

The Spanish conquerors gave to Mexico a veneer of European civilization, and likewise a veneer of Christianity. This latter was a great improvement upon the old paganism of the Aztecs, but it was very far from being what it ought to have been. The images of heathen deities were simply replaced by those of Christian saints, and the conquered people were as easily led to transfer their devotion to these greater and more powerful "gods." There might have been some apology for this as a beginning, if it had been followed by a clear exposition of the difference between idolatry and Christian worship; but apparently the Spanish monks were well satisfied to have won the outward allegiance of the Indians, without inquiring too deeply into the true character of their devotion.

How true all this is may be seen from the following quotation from the letters of Mme. Calderon de la Barca, the wife of a Spanish minister to Mexico, and herself a devout Roman Catholic: "The cross was planted here in a congenial soil, and as in the pagan East the statues of the divinities did no more than change their names from those of heathen gods to those of Christian saints, and image worship apparently continued; so here the poor Indian still bows before the visible representations of saints and virgins, as he did in former days before the monstrous shapes representing the unseen powers of the earth, the air, and the water; but he, it is to be feared, lifts his thoughts no higher than the rude image which a rude hand has carved. . . . He kneels before the bleeding image of the Saviour who died for him, before the gracious form of the Virgin who intercedes for him; but he believes that there are many virgins, of various gifts, and possessing various degrees of miraculous power and different degrees of wealth, according to the quality and number of



Photo by Waite

A COMBINATION OF PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Indians dressed for a religious dance in the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe

diamonds and pearls with which they are endowed—one even who is the rival of the other—one who will bring rain when there is drought, and one to whom it is well to pray in seasons of inundation.” Until a very short time ago the old pagan dances still survived as a feature of the worship in the great church of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico City; and they are still practised in some of the smaller churches of the immediate vicinity.

In view of this terrible degradation of the Christian religion, it is little wonder that the morals of the people have suffered in a corresponding degree. Marriage among a large proportion of the poorer classes is looked upon as a useless formality, an expensive luxury which they can ill afford. This is due to the exorbitant fees which the Church demands under penalty of excommunication; and partly, also, to the openly immoral lives of many of the clergy. Baptism is also very widely neglected, because the people are too poor to pay the fee. It is no wonder that the intel-

lectual stimulus which Mexico has recently received, through contact with other nations, has led to a wholesale rebellion against this travesty of the Christian religion. Of those who are responsible for Mexico's great advancement in the past fifty years, the majority have broken with the Roman Church, and are openly hostile to it. The most enlightened ones of the nation, in other words, have renounced the only religion they have ever known.

Religious Reform

It was due to the above-described condition of religion and morals that a movement for reform was started, during the administration of President Juarez. This movement was a spontaneous one, and was not due to any one source or leadership. “Evangelical” congregations, as they were called, sprang up in many places; and, as might have been expected, most of them went to great extremes. But this was not the case with all. Out of the first confusion there gradually emerged a little company of earnest and

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sober-minded men, to whom President Juarez himself and other members of the Liberal party gave encouragement and support. A Mexican missionary society was organized in the United States, and through them an American priest was maintained in Mexico, as agent of the society. Large sums of money were contributed. The famous old church of San Francisco was purchased for about \$30,000, and that of San José de Gracia (since reconsecrated as San Pedro) was practically presented to the reformers by President Juarez. The great popular preacher, Manuel Aguas, a canon of the Roman cathedral in Mexico City, having been appointed to oppose the reform movement, was himself converted, and at once assumed a position of leadership. Adhesions now came from every quarter, and many new congregations were organized. Under the influence of Aguas, the reformers organized "The Church of Jesus," and he was elected as the first bishop, expecting to receive recognition and consecration from the bishops of the American Church. He died suddenly, however, in 1872, before this could be accomplished.

The American priest referred to above, the Rev. Henry C. Riley, now became the acknowledged leader and was elected bishop. In 1875 the Rev. Alfred Lee, Bishop of Delaware, visited Mexico, and was so impressed by the movement, that he ordained seven men, first deacons, and then priests, for the "Mexican Branch of the Catholic Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Militant upon Earth." A covenant was made with the bishops of the American Church, by which they agreed to consecrate bishops for Mexico, upon the fulfilment of certain conditions. The conditions of this covenant were never fully complied with, but in 1879 the Rev. Mr. Riley received consecration.

From this time the affairs of the new Mexican Church ceased to prosper. Bishop Riley absented himself from his see for two years, and upon his return serious dissensions arose. The old Church of San Francisco was resold to the Romans, and several congregations

became schismatic. Under pressure of the American Church, Bishop Riley resigned, and a "Cuerpo Ecclesiastico" was recognized as the ecclesiastical authority in Mexico.

Representatives were sent by the Presiding Bishop to labor in Mexico. Notable among these was the Rev. Henry Forrester, who for many years acted as commissary in Mexico and whose memory is lovingly cherished by those whom he served. In spite of the faithful efforts of these men, the Mexican Church did not recover its former prestige and vigor. It was not a mission of the American Church, and it was poorly supported by the people. Many of the clergy were compelled to resort to secular work for a livelihood.

This was the darkest hour of the reform.

But a better day was about to dawn. In 1904 the Rev. Henry D. Aves, D.D., was consecrated as bishop, not for the Mexicans, but to shepherd the great number of Americans who had gone to Mexico for the purpose of exploiting its undeveloped resources. True to the Catholic principles which had always guided them, the native clergy asked to be received under his jurisdiction. This was accordingly done in February, 1906. Thus the way was opened for the Board of Missions to give the native Mexican work the status of a regular foreign mission. Regular appropriations are now made for the support of the Mexican work.

La Iglesia Catolica Mexicana

In becoming a mission of the Church in the United States, the native Mexican Church was obliged to forego, for the time, its independence. But it still thinks of itself as the Church of the Nation, the one faithful representative of pure Catholicity in the land of Mexico; and so it continues to proclaim itself by the popular title, "*La Iglesia Católica Mexicana*." The clergy and people have a profound conviction of the supremacy of sound Church principles. They have drawn their inspiration from a direct

study of primitive Christianity, yet their churches and services are marked by a simplicity which is almost austere, and it is on that basis that they have waged their fight.

The clergy now number fifteen foreign and ten Mexican. There are 1,181 Mexican and 814 English communicants, with seventeen churches and twenty chapels. At Mexico City is the Mary Josephine Hooker School, with sixty girls. At Guadalajara, the bishop's place of residence, is St. Andrew's Seminary, where postulants and candidates are being prepared for the ministry, also the beginnings of an orphanage and hospital. Of the need of mission schools Bishop Aves writes:

"The appeals for mission schools exceed our present ability to supply teachers. The people are ambitious for their children, appreciating the fact that education is the only doorway opened for their escape from the hopeless poverty which they have inherited into the conditions of self-betterment. And the clergy realize the strong attractive power of these schools, and the added opportunities they offer for the fortifying of their work. I am, however, adhering to the policy of requiring the people to assume their reasonable share of the burden, the providing of a suitable building and a pledge for a part of the teacher's support."

Under these conditions the Church is at present supporting seven mission day-schools.

English-Speaking Congregations

In losing for the time its independence, "*La Iglesia Católica Mexicana*" gained in comprehensiveness. It is no longer the Church merely of the Mexican people, but of the English-speaking residents as well. Just how many there are of these within the Republic would be very difficult to say. There are said to be 50,000 Americans alone, more than 10,000 of whom reside in the City of Mexico. There are also great numbers of Eng-

lish and Scotch. The majority of the English-speaking residents are engaged in mining or engineering, and most of them are scattered throughout the more remote and inaccessible parts of the country. The work among these people is almost identical with that in the mining regions of the western part of the United States. We have about a dozen congregations outside of Mexico City, ministered to by nine priests. Practically all of these congregations are small, and very far from self-support. Owing to the difficulty of renting from the Romanists, it is very important that they should acquire properties of their own, in which, of course, they will need outside assistance. In many places it is almost impossible to find shelter for our services, on account of the Roman boycott.

The only English-speaking congregation of the Church in Mexico that can boast a church building of its own, and that is self-supporting as well, is Christ Church in the City of Mexico. It was started many years ago by members of the Church of England, and the present handsome church was erected in 1898. With the later influx of Americans and the coming of Bishop Aves, it passed under American jurisdiction, and is now the centre and bulwark of the English-speaking work. The Rev. W. Jones-Bateman is its rector.

Such, in brief outline, is the double work which the Church is doing in the great Republic of Mexico. It is a work of peculiar difficulty, but likewise of peculiar promise. For Mexico is only awakening from the sleep which has held her bound so long. She is throwing off the ignorance and superstition of the past four centuries, and is seeking for better things. What she needs more than anything else is pure religion. And unless it is given her, she will soon have no religion at all, for the religion of Rome is fast losing its hold. To give her pure religion is the duty of the American Church.

Mexico is our nearest foreign missionary jurisdiction.



A MEXICAN PEON AND HIS BURDEN



A MEXICAN PEON AND HIS FAMILY

THE PEON AND HIS POSSIBILITIES

MEXICO is a land of contrasts. In the midst of its natural beauty, stately churches and progressive people, live the indescribably poor, ignorant and superstitious *peons*, constituting a vast majority of the Mexican people.

It was nearly four hundred years ago that this class began. When the Spaniards came from over the seas clad in their stone armor and carried their strange weapons, they seized the native Indian people of Mexico, took from them their fertile lands and forced them into a system of bondage called *peonage*. Years have passed, Spanish rule has ceased, a more merciful form of government protects the people with better laws, but still the *peonage* system lives, and the *peon* is virtually a slave on the great plantations, or lives out a miserable existence in the isolated mountain heights. These people bear the burdens of Mexico, and these people bear the hope of Mexico. From their children must rise a great independent middle class—educated, ambitious and prepared to fulfil the possibilities of a great nation.

Let us go to the homes of these people in order that we may understand their need of the Church.

Through an ugly hedge of cactus we see the little flat-roofed hut of adobe or



INDIAN GIRL AT HOOKER SCHOOL



A MEXICAN JACAL
One of the huts in which the peons live



A PEON GIRL GRINDING CORN

sun-dried mud. Its one room is rather dark inside, for there are no windows. The floor is the bare earth. There is neither stove nor fireplace, though it is often quite cold on the mesas and mountain sides. The heap of straw in the corner serves as a bed. There is a table, perhaps, and one or two stools. There is not a picture on the wall, nor a book or paper in the home—and probably no one could read them if there were. The invariable diet is corn and beans. There are no knives and forks, and the dishes are all home-made and of baked clay. The little girls have neither hats nor shoes, and their clothing is miserably scant and poor; for the father earns only two and a half *reals* (less than sixteen cents) a day. All this and much more must make life rather serious for these little ones. But more than all, they see little or no cheer or pleasure reflected in the faces of their parents. They are the children of a grave, stoical and seemingly hopeless people.

Thus in these *jacals* we hear no voice of joyful play or song or laughter; neither do we hear the voice of complaint or crying. Unending work and life are synonymous, and at an early age the children accept their share of the



PRESIDENTE FLORES AND HIS HOUSEHOLD

He doubted that a bishop would come so far simply to help the starving poor

endless work of gathering wood, carrying water, washing and grinding corn.

The federal schools—scarce and inadequate as they are—and the free mission schools are the only doorways by which these poor children may escape from the hopeless condition which they have inherited. Of these schools Bishop Aves says:

“They have pierced the darkness of popular ignorance with their little shafts of light, and have shot the spark of hope and ambition into the minds and hearts of many who will be the leaders of their people into better fields of life, privilege, and service.

“On many railways it is not uncommon to see young women of Indian birth serving as telegraph operators and station agents. Through the mission schools have come intelligent, self-respecting girls from the wretched *jacals* of the mountain wilderness, who are earning fair wages as clerks, accountants, typewriters, saleswomen, teachers and stenographers. And young men, whose only prospect was to herd a flock of goats or carry freight over the mountains at fourteen cents a day, are coming from these same schools and making their

way into trades and positions of responsibility and trust.

“I cannot adequately express my admiration of the work these free mission schools are doing. For whatever the actuating motive behind these schools may be—and by their fruits we should judge them—the results raise them above the mere effort to propagate sectarian names and traditions into the dignity of



DEACONESS AFFLECK

Who works among the poor of Mexico City

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a great social cause of national importance. They are potentially the lever by which a submerged people may be raised to a higher plane of privilege, opportunity, and Christian living.

"And that, it seems to me, should be the burden of our mission to Mexico; to help a helpless people to self-help. And to that I long to see our great, compassionate Mother Church give her heart and hand."

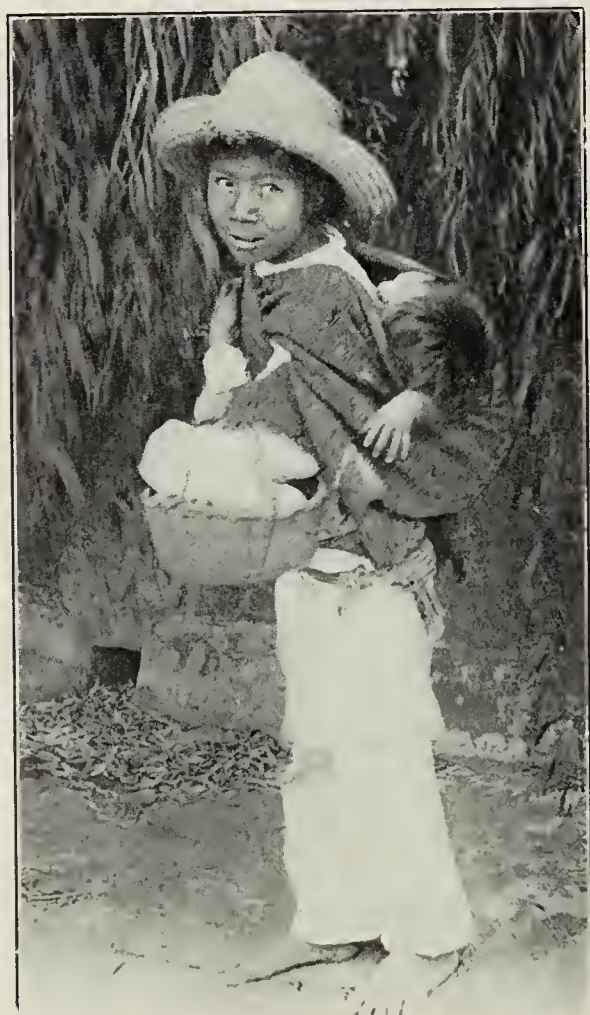
The Church to the Rescue

Sooner perhaps than he anticipated when he wrote the above words, there came to Bishop Aves the opportunity of putting into practical effect the sentiment which moved him. The fall of 1909 was a disastrous one in the mountain regions of Hidalgo and the approach of winter found the people in the grip of

cold and famine. Thousands suffered unspeakably, and without doubt hundreds would have perished utterly but for the beneficent work done by the Bishop of Mexico, in which he was aided by the general Church. Car-loads of corn were shipped from the United States and distributed by our missionary, the Rev. Samuel Salinas, from Nopalá and other centres, to the starving in twenty-five or more surrounding towns.

The Mexican Indians are both stoical and proud. They are inured to great suffering by the hard life which they lead, and only the direst stress would compel them to ask for help. It was therefore an evidence of their extremity that hundreds came from great distances asking for a handful of corn. By strict economy, allowing to each adult slightly over one pint of grain a day, starvation was averted and the poor contrived to live through this time of trial. Their gratitude for the benefaction was pathetic, and served to open to the Church a new door of access to the hearts of these poor people. Bishop Aves, who personally superintended the relief work, cites the following instance:

"At San Andres de Milpan, a community of 5,000 Otomis, where we spent our second night, we found the people grinding their little remnant of corn together with the cobs to make it last the longer. Our host here was the *presidente*, an intelligent and kind-hearted Indian, who was in deep distress for the suffering of his people. Our offer of corn for the most destitute was met with incredulous astonishment, and when he was told in the morning before we left that his guest in khaki was a bishop, he said, 'No, that cannot be, for bishops never go humbly. They go with eclat (*"con bomba"*)! And they go always to get, never to give. If I am to believe what you say, there must be a new religion in the world, of which I have never heard.' He guided us over the range, and secured a promise from our missionary to come again and hold a service in his house."



MEXICAN BOY AND BABY BROTHER



HOOKER SCHOOL GIRLS ON THEIR WAY TO CHURCH

OUR CHURCH SCHOOLS

A DESCRIPTION of the work of three schools will give a good idea of the educational work of the Church in Mexico.

The Hooker School

The "Mary Josephine Hooker Memorial School and Orphanage," situated at Mexico City, was established by Mrs. Hooker, who came to Mexieo in 1876. Early she realized the need of a Church school for native girls, and to that end devoted her fortune and her life. In January, 1893, Mrs. Hooker died, and Miss Henrietta de Saussure Driggs, who had been associated with Mrs. Hooker, assumed control of the school.

There are about sixty pupils in the school, varying in age from six to sixteen. They come from all classes, from the wealthy Mexican who pays the tuition of his daughter, to the orphan of the *peon* family.

The curriculum of the school is, in the main, the same as that of the Government schools. To it is added English, lace-work and embroidery, while a share in the housework of the school, its washing, darning, care of the dining-room, etc., makes a liberal education for some

of the future wives and mothers of Mexieo.

The home life and religion of the school has a marked influence over the girls. Morning Prayer each day in the little chapel, the after-supper hour with its *contendo los cuentos* (telling stories), and the Sunday morning worship, when



THREE LITTLE PEONS

Many a Hooker School graduate began life like this little girl



WHERE THE SERVICES AT HUMINI WERE HELD

the girls, dressed in white, wearing neat straw hats with a simple band of red ribbon, march with a processional to the chapel—all serve to make the girls love the school and care for what it stands.

*The Church and School at Humini**

Bishop Aves gives the following description of the work at the little mountain village of Humini. Riding up the mountain side for his visitation a great crowd gathered to meet him.

"A very plainly and poorly-clad people, these; but, other reasons aside, we must respect and admire them for their devoted earnestness, which is evidenced by their works. They have built with their own hands the little stone church, about thirty feet by fifty, and the school-house (of about the same size) standing by its side. The chapel was very humble, but it cost \$200, which for rich people would have been nothing, but was an immense sum for people who earn only twelve cents daily; however, there was a

firm purpose, and the construction progressed little by little. It was very impressive to see the boys and girls and women carrying the stones for the church, and the men of the congregation giving weekly one day's work as their part.

"Now they are building a home for the teachers. They have a proud and independent spirit, these Otomi people; and it was probably this same spirit which led their forbears to the rocky fastnesses when the foreign conquerors claimed their rich valleys and would have made them slaves.

"The occasion of our visit is made especially important by the fact that we are to examine the school; and the buildings are made as festive as green boughs and wild flowers can make them. Although the simple tests in the 'three R's' are attended by some fearfulness and weeping, when we reflect that only six months ago none of these girls, some of whom are sixteen years of age, knew either letters or figures, we must admire their progress. Indeed these Indian girls are both bright and ambitious. And we are reminded that it was from these Otomi people that sev-

* Humini will not be found on the map, as it is a locality and not a town. The nearest village is Nopala.



THE NEW SCHOOL AND CHAPEL AT HUMINI

eral of our Hooker Annex girls came, who, during the past four years, won a majority of the prizes offered by the government at the National Normal School at Toluca. When we go into the homes of these children and find no single book or paper or picture there, a realizing sense comes to us of the great blessing this school will be to them in making their darkened lives brighter, larger, fuller, better, and in helping them to better opportunities of self-help.

"Ten years ago two little girls, Amelia and Leonora Bustamante, were taken from this community to be educated at the Mary Josephine Hooker School and Orphanage. They are now the teachers here, receiving each a salary of \$5 a month, too little on which to keep house and clothe themselves properly."

St. Andrew's Seminary

At Guadalajara, Bishop Aves has established St. Andrew's Seminary. Six men are now in residence and as frequently as deacons can be spared from active work in the field they are placed at St. Andrew's and prepared for the priesthood. Here also will be sent post-

ulants and such older boys as show superior merit in the mission day-schools. The difficulties in giving a theological education are very great, inasmuch as there are no theological books in Spanish, everything that is to be presented must first be translated and then explained and adapted. The Rev. William Watson, who is in charge of the work, hopes that in time the lecture notes of the present may take book form for instruction in the future.

Bishop Aves says: "As illustrating what others think of the Church's opportunity here, I quote the words addressed to me by a Baptist missionary of long experience in the native field: 'There is no Church but yours that can successfully reach and hold the natives. You can both attract and hold them, for you have a religious form that appeals to them and can satisfy them. Therefore, I believe that the work of giving religious enlightenment to Mexico must be done by you, if it is done at all. What you need is a well-equipped divinity-school for the native young men.'

"If our American Church is to take seriously its mission to Mexico, it will see the challenge that lies in an opportunity such as this."

SOME FACTS

MEXICO is as large as that part of the United States lying east of the Mississippi River.

Its bishop is responsible for the most extensive territory of any bishop in the American Church.

Bishop Aves has two distinct spheres of service. He is a missionary bishop to the Americans in Mexico, and he is also, by its own free choice, the bishop in charge of the independent native Church.

Many thousands of young Americans are in Mexico, and their number increases rapidly.

The "Mexican Catholic Church" is the result of a movement begun within the Roman Communion, and is made up almost entirely of the very poor. They have put themselves under our protection and look to us for guidance and help.

For all this work the Board of Missions appropriates (Jan. 1911):

For salaries, travel and other expenses of the bishop and archdeacon . . .	\$ 6,450
For the Hooker School (7 teachers and 63 girls)	4,400
For 13 foreign and 10 Mexican clergy, and for 44 other teachers and workers, repairs, insurance, etc. .	17,577
	<hr/>
	\$28,427

It is to remedy such conditions, existing in this and other fields, that the Board calls upon the Church to join in a forward movement for missions. Who will say that it is not imperative?

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281 Fourth Avenue, New York, by calling for leaflet No. 1600
Price, 5 cents